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VZCZCXYZ0012
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAN #0262 0741233
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 151233Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4493
INFO RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE 0961
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0374
RUEHPL/AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS 0311
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0841
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0047
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0047
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0053

UNCLAS ANTANANARIVO 000262

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA-SKHANDAGLE, KLUU, GGOTTLIEB, AFERRARA, CPRATT
FOR DCHA/FFP/DP - SDOSHANJH, PNOVICK
AFR/EA - OCOLE
STATE FOR AF/E, MBEYZEROV AND DMALAC
STATE FOR CA/OCS/ACS/AF, RBRANSON
PRETORIA USAID/OFDA/SARO - HHALE
NAIROBI FOR USAID/EA/FFP - NESTES, DGORDON
ROME FOR FODAG
GENEVA FOR RMA, DHA, IFRC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SENV EAID PREL SOCI CASC MA
SUBJECT: CYCLONE INDLALA STRIKES MADAGASCAR - FIRST REPORT
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¶1.   SUMMARY: Tropical cyclone Indlala struck the east coast of
Madagascar early morning on March 15, with the city of Antalaha
hardest hit. Due to the ongoing lack of communications, we do not
have reliable information about casualties and property damage, but
expect it may be considerable. Six AmCits - five Peace Corps
Volunteers (PCVs) and one private American - are believed to be in
the region. Post confirmed the safety of two of the PCVs as of the
evening of March 14 and continues to reach out to confirm the safety
of the other four AmCits. END SUMMARY.

¶2.   Tropical cyclone Indlala made landfall on Madagascar's
northeastern coast at Antalaha, a city of approximately 175,000
population, the early morning on March 15. Attempts to communicate
with the city of Antalaha by telephone and shortwave radio have been
unsuccessful, but Post is hearing initial reports of high winds,
36-foot storm wave surges, and power outages in Antalaha. One
forecasting service suggested overnight winds of 125 knots offshore
and 107 knots at landfall this morning. The national radio reported
at 1230 that neighboring Maroantsetra is "badly damaged" with power
outages, destroyed homes and felled trees; people are seeking
shelter in schools and churches. The storm is expected to veer
south west and dissipate fairly rapidly. Meteo France - a regional
satellite weather station - has issued a warning for residents of
Tamatave (further south along Madagascar's eastern coastline)
through the next 24 hours, but contacts there report only heavy
rain.

¶3.   The Consular Section issued a warden message to AmCits at 0700
March 14. Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) in the neighboring cities
of Vohemar, Diego Suarez and Andapa are accounted for and reporting
only heavy rain. Post has had mixed success communicating with the
six AmCits directly in and around Antalaha. Three are PCVs who are
believed to be safe; two of them confirmed at 2230 March 14 they had
moved into a strong cement shelter, and one who at 1200 on March 14
was known to be in the forest outside of Maroantsetra. Two
additional PCVs outside of Maroantsetra have been unreachable. All
five PCVs had been instructed earlier to report back the afternoon
of March 15. Post has been unable to obtain any information on a
sixth AmCit registered in Maroantsetra. Post will continue to seek
information regarding their whereabouts and welfare as it becomes
available. All other registered AmCits in the area are either in

Diego Suarez in the north or Tamatave in the east – safely out of the storm's path for now.

¶4. With Madagascar still picking itself up after several cyclones already this season, as well as unusually widespread and prolonged heavy rains not associated with tropical storms, the government and relief agencies are stretched very thin. Harvests across the country have been devastated by flooding due to torrential rain in large areas of the northwest, west and southeast, as well as droughts in the south. Official estimates cite 33,000 people displaced and 90,000 hectares of agricultural land damaged. In addition, it now appears likely that Antalaha and its vicinity will require immediate relief after the storm passes. Post will continue to monitor the situation to assess the potential need for a disaster declaration.
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